Positivism, Postmodernism, or Critical Theory? A Case Study of Communications Students' Understandings of Criticism

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Abstract

Neoliberalism has resulted in a large-scale economization and capitalization of society that has also permeated the academic system. The paper at hand provides the result of a case study that analyzed how students, who are today frequently confronted by the combination of studying and precarious labour and insecure job perspectives, assess the importance of critical thinking. As a theoretical foundation, a distinction between positivistic, postmodern, and Marxian critique is drawn and discussed. Students of communication science at the University of Salzburg were asked to read a focus text by Herbert Marcuse that deals with the notion of critique and to write short essays afterwards, in order to reflect on the notion of critique that is needed today. 52 answer texts were analyzed by the method of quantifying qualitative content analysis. The results show the predominance of a positivistic understanding of critique and provide implications for curricula design and pedagogical action.

Keywords: critical theory, critical thinking, positivism, postmodernism, students' consciousness

1. Introduction

40 years ago, in 1968, student protests reached their climax, especially in France, Germany, and the United States. Topics that were questioned by the protesters included imperialism and the war in Vietnam, a lack of democracy in universities, capitalist consumer culture, standardized Fordist life styles, conservative values, and post-fascists structures. The students' movement and the New Left did not reach the size of a revolutionary movement; nonetheless their activities can be interpreted as anti-capitalist rebellion. Herbert Marcuse (1969: x) argued in this context that "they have taken the idea of revolution out of the continuum of repression and placed it into its authentic dimension: that of liberation". Forty years have passed, capitalist society has changed, neoliberalism has resulted in a large-scale economization and capitalization of society that has also permeated universities and the academic system. Given these circumstances, how important is critical political thinking for students today? Do they consider the Marxian critique of society rather important and topical or rather unimportant and outmoded?

We cannot give definite answers, but the aim of this paper is to conduct a case study that addresses these questions. Our study focuses on notion of critique of students of communication research in Salzburg.

During the past decades there have been students protests, such as those against the introduction of tuition fess in Austria in 2001 and in Germany since 2003 or against the reforms of labour legislation for entrants in France in March 2006. Also the movement for democratic globalization is particularly attractive for young people and students. At the same time, students in many countries feel more economic pressure and are facing the problems of potential unemployment, job loss, and precarious labour. Given these conditions, the question is if neoliberal economization has more resulted in adaptation or radicalization of political consciousness.

First, we will comment on theoretical foundations of the notion of critique (section 2). Then we will explain our research method (section 3), present the conducted study's results, and will finally give an interpretation of draw some conclusions (section 5).

2. The Notion of Critique

The aim of this section of the paper is to outline a conceptual framework that shows how the notion of critique can be defined. The result will be a typology that consists of three different potential definitions. We point out that we favour one of these three definitions. In this section, we will discuss three ways of how critique has been defined in the past. First, we will focus on a Marxian understanding and on Critical Theory (2.1.), then positivistic (2.2.) and postmodern (2.3.) approaches.

2.1. The Notion of Critique in Marxist Critical Theory

It is our contention that given the predominance of neoliberal economization, Marxist critique is particularly important today because it stresses the dominant role that economic interests play in capitalism and allows questioning these interests and the underlying structures. Therefore the notion of critique that we want to advance is the Marxian one, as defined in the *Introduction to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*: "Theory is capable of gripping the masses as soon as it demonstrates *ad hominem*, and it demonstrates *ad hominem* as soon as it becomes radical. To be radical is to grasp the root of the matter. But, for man, the root is man himself. (...) The criticism of religion ends with the teaching that *man is the highest essence for man* – hence, with the *categoric imperative to overthrow all relations* in which man is a debased, enslaved, abandoned, despicable essence, relations which cannot be better described than by the cry of a Frenchman when it was planned to introduce a tax on dogs: Poor dogs! They want to treat you as human beings!" (Marx 1844a: 385).

There are three important elements of this notion of critique:

- Epistemology – Dialectical Realism:
  The material world is seen as primary and is grasped, described, analyzed, and partly transformed by humans in academic work. Analyses are conducted that are looking for the Essence of societal Existence by identifying contradictions that lie at the heart of development**.** Analyses are conducted that are looking for the Essence of societal Existence by identifying contradictions that lie at the heart of development**.** Critical theory analyzes social phenomena not based on instrumental reason and one-dimensional logic, i.e. it operates: 1. With the assumption that phenomena do not have linear causes and effects, but are contradictory, open, dynamic, and carry certain development potentials in them and hence should be conceived in complex forms; 2. Based on the insight that reality should be conceived as having neither only opportunities

nor only risks, but contradictory tendencies that pose both positive and negative potentials at the same time that are realized or suppressed by human social practice. Dialectic analysis in this context means complex dynamic thinking, realism an analysis of real possibilities and a dialectic of pessimism and optimism. In a dialectical analysis, phenomena are analyzed in terms of the dialectics of agency and structures, discontinuity and continuity, the one and the many, potentiality and actuality, global and local, virtual and real, optimism and pessimism, essence and existence, immanence and transcendence, etc.

- Ontology - Materialism:
  Critical theory is materialistic in the sense that it addresses phenomena and problems not in terms of absolute ideas and predetermined societal development, but in terms of resource distribution and social struggles. Reality is seen in terms that address ownership, private property, resource distribution, social struggles, power, resource control, exploitation, and domination. In such an endeavour a reactualized notion of class is of central importance (cf. Fuchs 2008a: chapter 7.3).
  To make a materialistic analysis also means to conceive society as negativity, to identify antagonisms means to take a look at contradictory tendencies that relate to one and the same phenomenon, create societal problems and require a fundamental systemic change in order to be dissolved. To analyze society as contradictory also means to consider it as dynamic system because contradictions cause development and movement of matter.
  In order to address the negativity of contemporary society and its potential, research also needs to be oriented on the totality. That dialectics is a philosophy of totality in this context means that society is analyzed on a macro-scale in order to grasps its problems and that reasons for the necessity of positive transformations are to be given.
- Axiology – Negating the negative:
  All critical approaches in one or the other respect take the standpoint of oppressed or exploited classes and individuals and make the judgement that structures of oppression and exploitation benefit certain classes at the expense of others and hence should be radically transformed by social struggles. This view constitutes a form of objectivity. Critical theory does not accept existing social structures as they are, it is not interested in society as it is, but in what it could be and could become. It deconstructs ideologies that claim that something cannot be changed and shows potential counter-tendencies and alternative modes of development. That the negative antagonisms are sublated into positive results is not an automatism, but depends on the realization of practical forces of change that have a potential to rise from the inside of the systems in question in order to produce a transcendental outside that becomes a new whole. The axiological dimension of critique is an interface between theory and political praxis.

Marcuse (1937) explains that critical theory differs from traditional theory because it is oriented on material changes of society that produce reason and happiness for all. Traditional theory would be idealistic and individualistic because it would conceive freedom and reason as a state of mind, not as a material state of society. Based on its materialism, critical theory would be oriented on social struggles of subordinated groups. Marcuse sets out that critical theory is objective and normative in the sense that it opposes the subordination of humans under the economy (exploitation of labour) and demands a new, different totality. The common element of idealist philosophy and critical theory would be that they both negate capitalism, the first by the notion of the free thinking individual that is more than an economic subject, the second by the interpretation of freedom as a general state of society that humans have to struggle for. Horkheimer (1937/1970) argues that traditional thinking is oriented on instrumental reason. It would be an analysis of that which is positively given and would affirm domination through its ideal of ethical neutrality. Critical Theory in contrast would reflect the difference between possibility and existence.

Marxian critique shows the historical and ideological character of capitalism. As Marxian critique analyzes the inherent contradictions of capitalism that produce crises, it shows that capitalism through the antagonism between productive forces and relations of production contains and develops its own negativity. Such a method of critique is immanent critique, it starts from the conditions of capitalism without appealing to transhistorical values. However, such an interpretation of Marxian critique as pure immanent critique has historically resulted in deterministic interpretations of history that have been historically falsified. Therefore it has been stressed that Marxian critique also contains transcendental elements (e.g. Lukes 1985, Sayers 1997) – the vision of a co-operative society as the best form of human existence. Marxian critique is transcendental not in an idealistic or religious sense, the transcendence that it imagines is a not-yet existent society that is anticipated by the existence of the proletariat and that has its material preconditions in capitalist itself. It is an immanent transcendence coming from the inside of society itself. Marxian critique can in this sense be best interpreted as dialectic of immanence and transcendence. Since the late 1970s Marxian critique and transcendentals in general have come under heavy attack by postmodern thought, which argued that all notions of truth and essence are totalitarian. Marxian critique was increasingly superseded by strictly immanent critiques (cf. e.g. Deleuze 2001, Foucault 1977, Lyotard 1979) oriented on identity politics and local reforms. Postmodernism has in recent years been challenged by various approaches that show a new focus on transcendental notions of Marxist critique: transfactuality by Roy Bhaskar (1993), transcritique by Kojin Karatani (2003), or the transempirical as totality of the world that is given reason for by dialectical philosophy in the works of Hans Heinz Holz (2005).

Fotini Vaki (2005) has argued that transcendental elements in Marxist thinking, especially Habermas' notion of communicative rationality in dominationless discourse, are unhistorical, idealistic, fetishistic, and based on the notion of an essential and pure identity. An alternative would be a complete immanent critical theory. He sees such an immanence realized in Adorno's *Negative Dialectics*, which is focusing on internal contradictions and negations of capitalism and does not assume a transcendental outside. However, it can be argued that in Adorno's theory, non-identity realized in the position of the critical theorist who maintains a position outside of instrumental reason and autonomous art in his *Aesthetic Theory* constitute transcendentals because they are considered as resisting moments that question the repressive totality. All Marxist thinking to a certain extent contains transcendental elements.

Some observers have argued that Horkheimer's and Adorno's critical theory was an immanent critique (Calhoun 1995: 23; Honneth 2007: 61, 64). But for both Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno transcendental elements of Critical Theory are important. So e.g. Horkheimer speaks of the need for a society without injustice or conditions without exploitation and oppression (Horkheimer 1937/1970: 238, 257). In the chapter on *The Concept of Enlightenment* in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Horkheimer argues that transcendentalism is important and is destroyed by positivist thinking that is based on pure immanence: "The pure immanence of positivism, its ultimate product, is nothing other than a form of universal taboo. Nothing is allowed to remain outside, since the mere idea of the 'outside' is the real source of fear. (...). Enlightened thinking has an answer for this, too: finally, the transcendental subject of knowledge, as the last reminder of subjectivity, is itself seemingly abolished and replaced by the operations of the automatic mechanisms of order, which therefore run all the more smoothly" (Horkheimer/Adorno 1944/2002: 11, 23). These passages show that Horkheimer considered transcendentalism very important and as a form of non-identity that needs to be upheld against positivism.

Immanence for Horkheimer and Adorno was not a positive feature of critical theory, but was seen as the feature in society that critical theory questions.

Even those who argue that capitalism through its inner contradictions produces crises and hence its own demise, which will result in communism, have the notion of a not-yet existing outside. The question is only to which degree this transcendentalism is stressed and how it is related to agency or potential agency. Here, various traditions of Marxian thinking differ. All of them have in common that the transcendental elements are not posited outside of society, but are anchored in the inner contradictions of capitalism, such as the antagonism between the productive forces and the relations of production. Hence Marxist transcendentalism is materialist and based on a societal immanence, it is an immanent transcendentalism or transcendental immanence. Structural Marxists tend to argue that the future of society is mainly shaped by the internal contradictions of capitalism, which are seen as constituting a potential outside and/or a repressive ideological affirmation of the status quo. Humanist Marxists tend to argue that the potential outside is constituted mainly through class struggles. A third position tries to combine both structural and agency-oriented immanent transcendentalism.

In their debate on *Recognition or Redistribution?* (Fraser/Honneth 2003), critical theorists Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth both argue for the philosophical position of immanent transcendence. Fraser characterizes this position as seeking for "a foothold in the social world that simultaneously points beyond it" (Fraser/Honneth 2003: 202). Honneth speaks of the dialectic of immanence and transcendence (Fraser/Honneth 2003: 238). Honneth (2007: 57-69) distinguishes between a constructive, transcendental critique, a reconstructive, immanent critique, and a Foucaultian genealogical critique. Critical theory would combine all three forms. In the debate with Fraser, he characterizes this combination as immanent transcendence. Transcendence "must be attached to a form of practice or experience which is on the one hand indispensable for social reproduction, and on the other hand – owing to its normative surplus – points beyond all given form of social organization. (…) 'transcendence' should be a property of 'immanence' itself, so that the facticity of social relations always contains a dimension of transcending claims" (Fraser/Honneth 2003: 244). The difference is that Fraser sees the immanent element of contemporary society that can transcend it in social movements that engage in political struggles (Fraser/Honneth 2003: 205), whereas Honneth is very critical of new social movements (Fraser/Honneth 2003: 114-125), considers them as rather affirmative, and sees immanent transcendence in an objective morality that should be legally implemented in the form of laws.

2.2. The Positivistic Notion of Critique

The difference between traditional theory and critical theory was also the implicit categorical difference in the positivism debate in German sociology in 1961. For Karl R. Popper (1962) the method of the social sciences is gaining and differentiating knowledge by testing solutions to problems. This method would be critical because scholars would question the works of others in order to improve knowledge in trial and error processes. For Popper critique is an epistemological method that shows logical contradictions. Theodor W. Adorno (1962) argues that contradictions are not only epistemological (in the relation of subject-object), but can be inherent in objects themselves so that they cannot be resolved by acquiring new knowledge (Ibid.: 551). Adorno stresses that Popper's ideal of value-free science is shaped by the bourgeois concept of value as exchange value (Ibid.: 560). Adorno (1969b, 291) stresses that positivism is only oriented on appearance, whereas Critical Theory stresses the difference between essence and appearance. He points out that Popper's notion of critique is subjective and cognitive (1969b, 304).

Popper can be considered as a representative of traditional theory because he sees critique and truth as individual and subjective concepts. These are idealistic notions for him.

Adorno's notions are materialistic because he sees them as oriented on society as totality and its material conditions.

There are standardized psychological tests, such as the California Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory (CCTDI) or the Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal (WGCTA), available that aim at measuring critical thinking. However, most of these tests are based on a purely positivistic notion of critique. Aspects of questioning domination, as typical for Marxian thinking, are missing.

The authors of the CCTDI test define critical thinking based on the results of a Delphi project that was conducted by the American Philosophical Association in 1990. The qualities listed all fall within the cognitive and communicative dimensions of the central characteristics of positivistic thinking (cf. Facione et al. 1995). The CCTDI is made up of 75 6-point likert scale items and seven scales (cf. Facione et al. 1995, Giancarlo and Facione 2001):
1. Truthseeking (desire for best knowledge, inclination to ask challenging questions),
2. Openmindedness (tolerance for new ideas and divergent views),
3. Analyticity (anticipating difficulties, alertness for the need to intervene and solving problems),
4. Systematicity (inclination to be organized),
5. Critical thinking self-confidence (trust in one's own reasoning),
6. Inquisitiveness (intellectual curiosity for learning new things),
7. Maturity of judgment (judiciousness in complex decision-making).
Most of these seven scales can be mapped to three central elements of positivistic thinking: assessment and opinion formation (4, 5, 6), asking questions (1), constructive change (3, 7). The second scale reflects the postmodern quality of plurality. Elements of Marxian critique are missing, hence we consider this test and comparable other tests not suitable as methodological ground for our study or for defining critique. Another limit of this test is that it is purely quantitative and therefore cannot take into account qualitative arguments and opinions that can only be observed if respondents are asked to write answers to asked questions.

There are also more qualitatively oriented tests of critical thinking, such as the Ennis-Weir Critical Thinking Essay Test (Ennis and Weir 1985). The respondents are asked to read a letter to the editor of a newspaper and to write a response paragraph for each paragraph of the letter. The tested characteristics of critical thinking are again either positivistic (such as "stating one's point", "seeing the reasons and assumptions", "getting the point", "offering good reasons") or postmodern ("seeing other possibilities (including other possible explanations") (Ennis and Weir 1985: 1).

Burbules and Berk (1999: 46f) point out the difference between Critical Thinking approaches and Marxian-inspired Critical Pedagogy in education: "The Critical Thinking tradition concerns itself primarily with criteria of epistemic adequacy. (...) The prime tools of Critical Thinking are the skills of formal and informal logic, conceptual analysis, and epistemology. (...) The primary preoccupation of Critical Pedagogy is with social injustice and how to transform inequitable, undemocratic or oppressive institutions and social relations".

Henry Giroux has characterized the Critical Thinking approach as positivistic and ideological: "The most powerful, yet limited, definition of critical thinking comes out of the positivist tradition in the applied sciences and suffers from what I call the Internal Consistency position. According to the adherents of the Internal Consistency position, critical thinking refers primarily to teaching students how to analyze and develop reading and writing assignments from the perspective of formal, logical patterns of consistency (...) While all of

the learning skills are important, their limitations as a whole lie in what is excluded, and it is with respect to what is missing that the ideology of such an approach is revealed" (Giroux 1994: 200f).

Based on the insight that the Critical Thinking approach does not account for aspects of oppression, we are methodologically oriented on making a distinction that differentiates a broader range of potential concepts of critique.

2.3. The Postmodern Notion of Critique

The main postmodern critique of notions such as essence, ground, foundation, truth, unity, or universals is the argument that such categories can be used for legitimating grand narratives of domination. Postmodernists ague that especially Soviet Marxism used such a strategy. Therefore it would be better to assume that all social structures are pure social constructions, that history is fully relative and open to chance, and that there are no forms of unity and universal commonalities of humans or society. Judith Butler in this context argues against dialectical thinking that dialectical causation introduces a primacy of certain categories that she sees as "imperializing gesture of dialectical appropriation" (Butler 1990: 19). "Dialectical appropriation and suppression of the Other is one tactic among many, deployed centrally but not exclusively in the service of expanding and rationalizing the masculinist domain" (Butler 1990: 19).

The poststructuralist critique of universal essence has most clearly been formulated by Foucault and goes back to his interpretation of Nietzsche. The method of genealogy would be opposed to the search for origins, things would "have no essence or (...) their essence was fabricated in a piecemeal fashion from alien forms" (Foucault 1977: 142). History would not have the inherent potential for freedom and reason: "Humanity doesn't gradually progress from combat to combat until it arrives at universal reciprocity, where the rule of law finally replaces warfare; humanity installs each of its violences in a system of rules and thus proceeds from domination to domination" (151). Genealogy "refuses the certainty of absolutes" (152), history would be negative, dominative, chance, conflict, lost, and an error. Genealogy would be directed against the notion of history as: 1. Reminiscence or recognition; 2. Continuity or representative of a tradition; 3. Truth and knowledge (160). Things should be defined "without reference to the ground, the foundation of things, but by relating them to the body of rules that enable them to form as objects of a discourse and thus constitute the conditions of their historical appearance" (Foucault 2002: 53).

Similar ideas were formulated by Rorty. "So we have come to distrust the people who tell us that 'you cannot change human nature' – a slogan that was employed against the education of women, interracial marriage, and gay liberation" (Rorty 1998).

It is certainly important and true that the notion of essence has been used as an ideology that legitimates oppression. So e.g. Hitler argued that the inner essence of Jews is parasitism. He wrote in *Mein Kampf* that the Jew in "order to carry on his existence as a parasite on other peoples, he is forced to deny his inner nature" (Hitler 1925: 335)[1]. Herbert Marcuse (1941) has argued that the Nazi notion of essence is based on particularism and is opposed to the Hegelian and Marxian notion of essence, which assumes the existence of universal qualities of humans and society. For Hegel, essence is not a particularistic, but a universalistic concept. He argues: "The Absolute is the Essence" (Hegel 1830: §112). Essence is ground of existence. The ground is the unity of identity and difference (...) It is essence put explicitly as a totality" (Hegel 1830: §121). In Marx's philosophical writings, Hegelian essence is interpreted as sociality and co-operation. "The

individual is the social being" (Marx 1844b: 538). The implication of this assumption is that co-operation is something that all humans share, that capitalism alienates the potentials for capitalism, and that societal conditions should be created that allow all humans to participate and to have equally realized rights and to live in equity. It is this stress on universal equity that led to the Nazis' hostility towards Hegel and Marx. So e.g. in the main work by Alfred Rosenberg (1930), the Nazis' primary ideologist, Hegel is opposed because for him the state was a universal concept. Rosenberg argues that Hegel's and Marx's writings are foreign to the notion of blood ("blutfremd") (Rosenberg 1930: 525), whereas Nietzsche is celebrated as someone who destroyed all values and stood for the breeding of a higher race ("rassische Hochzucht") (Rosenberg 1930: 525). Herbert Marcuse summarizes the Nazi's opposition towards Hegel's universalism: "The state as reason – that is, as a rational whole, governed by universally valid laws, calculable and lucid in its operation, professing to protect the essential interest of every individual without discrimination – this form of state is precisely what National Socialism cannot tolerate" (Marcuse 1941: 413).

The postmodernist enmity towards universalism and essence makes it impossible to envision a state of society, in which there is universal wealth and well-being for all, and impossible to assess such conditions as normatively desirable. Postmodernism does not have a political vision. Butler (1990) and Rorty (1998) argue that an emerging unity is acceptable if it is not apriori envisioned, but emerges spontaneously. Foucault (1977) argues that human history is a sequence of domination. He sees no possibility for the realization of universal reason and happiness. That something emerges spontaneously from below does not guarantee that it benefits all. Butler's and Rorty's postmodern anti-essentialism and anti-foundationalism is relativistic, it equalizes all societal conditions, e.g. fascism and participatory democracy, and therefore in our opinion trivializes the bestiality of fascism because it does not provide categories that allow normative judgement of such conditions. Foucault's anti-essentialism and anti-foundationalism results in a negative concept of history. Although he opposes universalism and essentialism, he essentializes human history as necessary dominative. Foucault's method of genealogy does not know the possibility of human and societal betterment, wealth and equity for all.

The alternative for us is to assume, as Herbert Marcuse did, that there are universal human characteristics such as sociality, co-operation, or the desire for wealth, happiness, freedom, reason, that conditions should be created that allow the universal realization of these qualities, that societies that do not guarantee the realization of these human potentials are false societies, and that consciousness that wants to perpetuate such false societal conditions is false consciousness. Such a form of universalism is not totalitarian, but should be read as a form of humanism that struggles for universal equity. Only the assumption that there is something positive that all humans have in common allows the envisioning of a state where all humans are guaranteed equal fundamental rights as desirable. Such essential conditions are not given and envisioned automatically, they have historical character and under given economic, political, cultural, and technological conditions they can be reached to a certain degree. Humans have the ability to struggle and to act consciously in transformative ways. Therefore each societal epoch is shaped by the question if humans will or will not act to create and realize the epoch's inherent and dynamically developing potentials or not. They shape and potentially enhance the space of possibilities and at the same time act or do not act to realize these created possibilities. Human essentials are substantial, if they are achieved or not and to which extent they can be realized and how they develop is completely historical, i.e. based on human agency. In Marx's works "the negativity of reality becomes a historical condition which cannot be hypostatized as a metaphysical state of affairs. (…) The given state of affairs is negative and can be rendered positive only by liberating the possibilities immanent in it. (…) Truth, in short, is not a realm apart from historical reality, nor a region of eternally valid ideas. (…)

Not the slightest natural necessity or automatic inevitability guarantees the transition from capitalism to socialism. (…) The revolution requires the maturity of many forces, but the greatest among them is the subjective force, namely, the revolutionary class itself. The realization of freedom and reason requires the free rationality of those who achieve it. Marxian theory is, then, incompatible with fatalistic determinism" (Marcuse 1941: 314f, 318f).

Marcuse anticipated the critique of postmodern relativism when he argued in 1936 for a Marxist notion of essence: "A theory that wants to eradicate from science the concept of essence succumbs to helpless relativism, thus promoting the very powers whose reactionary thought it wants to combat" (Marcuse 1968: 45). It makes practical political sense to argue that there is a truth immanent in society that is not automatically realized and that this truth is given in the need and possibility for a good life for all. What one can take as an important insight from postmodern theory is that oppression takes on different forms and contexts and that oppressed individuals and groups frequently stand in contradictory relations to each other. Bringing both arguments together allows to assume that truth is subdivided into partial truths that are interconnected, oppressed groups and individuals share common interests because they are all confronted by the same global system of oppression, at the same time they also have differing sub-interests because oppression is contextualized in many forms. What is needed is a differentiated unity, a form of politics that is based on unity in diversity.

There is a number of typologies of critical theories that considers postmodernism as always critical and Marxian theory only as one among several types of critical theories. Lois Tyson conceives critical theory as a method of analyzing texts: "when we interpret a literary text, we are doing literary criticism; when we examine the criteria upon our interpretation rests, we are doing critical theory" (Tyson 2006: 6). He distinguishes between 11 types of critical theory that can be applied to the deconstruction of texts: psychoanalytic criticism, Marxist criticism, feminist criticism, new criticism, reader-response criticism, structuralist criticism, deconstructive criticism, new historical and cultural criticism; lesbian, gay and queer criticism; African-American criticism, and postcolonial criticism (Tyson 2006). Douglas Tallack has established a similar typology of different forms of critical theory. For him critical theory is characterised by deconstructive self-reflexivity, immanent critique, and the examination of truth as the primary focus for analysis (Tallack 1995: 3). Tallack differentiates between five forms of critical theory: Marxism, Structuralism and Post-Structuralism, Psychoanalytic theory, feminism, post-foundational ethics and politics. David Hoy (Hoy 2004) criticizes Frankfurt school critical theory as a totalizing meta-narrative and suggests that postmodernism should be considered as a new form of critical theory. He speaks in this context of critical pluralism (Hoy/McCarthy 1994: 200) and of post-critique (Hoy 2004). Post-critique would be characterized by permanent self-critique, i.e. the questioning of its own foundations. Hoy (2004) discusses Nietzsche, Deleuze, Foucault, Bourdieu, Levinas, Derrida, Laclau, Mouffe, Žižek. Post-critique is a synthesis of Derrida's ethics and Foucault's politics that Hoy also terms "deconstructive genealogy".

Tyson's and Tallack's typologies and Hoy's notion of post-critique are informed by postmodern thinking. Tyson and Tallack argue for a plurality of different notions of critique. The main focus lies on the examination and deconstruction of truth. According to this point of view, texts, and the truths that they embody, can be analyzed from different perspectives like feminism, Structuralism, queer criticism, postcolonial-criticism, etc. This shift from power and domination to truth as the central category of critical as critique means a major change in the form of critical analysis. Steven Best and Douglas Kellner have argued in this context that such endeavours lead to relativistic approaches: "Postmodern theories can be used to attack or defend modernity, to reconstruct radical politics or to declare their

impossibility, to enhance Marxian theory or to denounce it, to bolster feminist critiques or to undermine them." (Best and Keller 1991: 356). Best and Kellner point out that postmodern theories limit themselves to the observation of different forms of oppression without placing them into a societal context: "postmodern theory splits capitalist society into separate and unmediated realms, analyzing culture in isolation from the economy, or politics apart from the conjuncture of business and government" (Best and Kellner 1991: 289). As we live in a capitalist society, considering the societal context always means looking at the economic dimension of societal problems. This does not mean a reduction to the economic realm, but the awareness that different forms of oppression, beside of having distinctive features, cannot be considered as unmediated and are linked by the societal context in which they take place. Thus postmodern approaches that do not take into consideration the societal context, and therefore the economic dimension of certain societal problems, cannot be understood as critical theories. This means that we only consider postmodern approaches as critical if they connect their analyses to aspects of class and economic exploitation. Not all postmodern approaches are critical in our sense of the term, only some of them.

2.4. A Typology of Defining Critique

Sections 2.1., 2.2., and 2.3. have shown that we favour a normative Marxian definition of critique, decline the positivistic definition of critique as ideological, and see postmodern thought only as critical if it acknowledges the central importance of class analysis. For the empirical study that we undertook, we needed a typology not of what critique can be, but how critique can potentially be defined, in order to analyze which theoretical approach the students in our case study favoured. Therefore, although our notion of critique is Marxian, we see three competing major understandings and definitions of critique at work today:

1. Representatives of a **positivistic notion of critique** argue that it is important that each individual engages in discourse, assesses arguments, forms his/her own opinion, and articulates her/his views. It would be wrong and even dangerous for democracy to passively accept opinions. The positions are strictly individualistic, as can be seen in formulations like: "Critique means to engage in a debate, to assess the arguments, and to form ones own opinion".
2. **Postmodern critique** is always oriented on challenging hierarchies, it does not accept the notions of truth and objectivity, and argues for liberal pluralism. E.g. it typically argues: "There is no ultimate standard of judging what is true because such standards are themselves socially constructed and shaped by power relations. Therefore there is no objective standard in society, only a plurality of different meanings and identities. It is therefore important to deconstruct truth claims, to accept other opinions as possible and legitimate ones and formulate ones own as equally reasonable".
3. **Marxist critique** is a specific form of objective knowledge that is achieved by being partial and not denying, but engaging in and showing the interconnection of academia and politics. It takes the standpoints of the oppressed. It is characterized by normative, objective, and political standpoints of the speakers, it speaks for whole groups, not just for individuals. It argues not just that one should form certain opinions, but that there are true and false opinions corresponding to true and false states of society. Typically, terms like domination, exploitation, class, power, or capitalism are used as negative terms. An ideal type of such a position is the following one: "Critique means to see all forms of domination and exploitation as repressive and to struggle against these conditions. It points towards a state of non-domination, a classless society".

The task of the case study that we undertook was to investigate which of these three understandings is predominant under communication students in Salzburg. Next, we describe the research method that was employed.

3. Research Method

We employed quantifying qualitative content analysis as research method (Ritzert 1972). The sample consisted of 52 texts by undergraduate students of communication science at the University of Salzburg. The research undertaken was limited to students of communication science because in these studies students are introduced to notions of critique already in the basic study period (such as the German positivism debate, critical political economy, cultural studies, gender studies), which ensures that there has already been some previous engagement with this issue. The advantage is that these students are more likely to understand the texts they were confronted with and to give reliable answers. The students were asked to read two focus texts on critical theory and to answer four questions. The first text was Marcuse's *Philosophy and Critical Theory* (Marcuse 1937), the second a text by one of the author that summarizes the notion of dialectical critique in the works of Hegel, Marx, and Marcuse (Fuchs 2005: 16-49). The two texts point out that Marcuse's notion of critique is a Marxist one that questions and wants to abolish capitalism. The questions posed to the students aimed at finding out how they position themselves towards Marxian critique of capitalism.

The four tasks were:

1. Summarize how Marcuse understands critique and which elements of critical thinking he mentions in his text *Philosophy and Critical Theory*.
2. Give your own definition of the category of critique and give reasons for your definition. Argue in how far this definition complies with or differs from Marcuse's views.
3. Is critique of society rather important or unimportant in today's societal situation? Why? What are in your opinion the tasks of social science? Give reasons for your answers. Which role should in your opinion social criticism have in the social sciences? Give again reasons for your answers.
4. Which tasks and goals of a critical theory of the information society can you imagine?

The data collection was carried out in two waves, one in winter term 2006/2007 (25 students), another in winter term 2007/2008 (27 students), which resulted in a total of 52 texts, 17 from male students and 35 from female students. A pre-test was carried out with all variables of 8 texts by 2 coders. The inter-coder reliability was 95,2%.

The three notions of critique introduced in section two can be overlapping in concrete analyzed units. Hence we operationalized them with multiple separate variables in order to determine which view is dominant in each text. Operationalization of the three forms of critique makes use of three variables per type (cf. table 1). The three variables per type form a triad: First there is an individual aspect describing which opinions are formed by a person, then there is an interaction, the actor communicates with others concerning a specific question, third there is action that aims at transforming social reality. This relationship can be interpreted as a dialectical Hegelian triad of identity (being-in-itself), being-for-another (negation), and being-in-and-for-itself (negation of the negation). Also each of the three dimensions (individual, interaction, transformation) can be read as a dialectical triad, in which the Marxist position sublates the positivistic and the postmodern standpoints.

Positivism is very general. It argues that any sort of opinion, questions, and change is desirable. Postmodernism is more specific, it argues for a plurality of opinions and identities. Marxism sublates this contradiction between the general and the specific by arguing for a concrete unity (specific) that is considered as a universal norm (general). It not just argues

for any opinion, question asking, or change, and not for a plurality, but for a unity in plurality of all oppressed groups and individuals that is partisan, anti-capitalist, non-dominative, and revolutionary. Marxist critique is also considered as integrative form of critique by Wolfgang Bonß (2003), who considers it as the unity of empirical (positivistic), immanent, and normative critique, and by Axel Honneth (2007), who sees it as the unity of normative (constructive), immanent (reconstructive) and genealogical critique (deconstruction of truths).

	Individual opinions	**Interaction**	**Transformative action**
Positivism	Assessment and opinion formation	Asking questions	Constructive change
Postmodernism	Accepting a plurality of views and knowledge as legitimate	Questioning dominant views	Local reform and identity politics
Marxism	Partisanship for the oppressed, dominated, and exploited	Anti-capitalist praxis	Revolution

Table 1: A typology of qualities of three notions of critique

Here is a description of the categories employed in the typology:

- Positivistic individual opinion: This variable is applicable if an actor describes critique as the individual evaluation of other statements in order to form a personal view and position himself/herself.
- Positivistic interaction: This variable is true if critique is described as asking questions to others in order to clarify the consistency of statements.
- Positivistic transformative action: This variable is positively given if it is suggested in a unity of analysis that critique must always be positive, i.e. make suggestions how to improve a situation immanently. There is an orientation on dialogue, improvements, and finding better solutions.
- Postmodern individual opinion: Plurality of knowledge and opinions is one central aspect of postmodernist thought. This variable is true if it is stressed that it is important that different opinions can be voiced and should be recognized as legitimate.
- Postmodern interaction: This variable is applicable if critique is described as challenging authorities, absolute knowledge, universalism, the notion of truth, or dominant opinions.
- Postmodern transformative action: Desirable change in postmodernist thought is conceived as the acknowledgement or struggle for acknowledgement of the identity of certain groups or as local reform politics. It is a politics of difference and plurality.
- Marxist individual opinion: This variable is positively given if a normative notion of critique that stresses partisanship for oppressed, discriminated, exploited, or dominated groups or individuals is present.
- Marxist interaction: This form of interaction is present if questioning and practical negation in terms of class interests, injustice, and fair socio-economic distribution is present in a text.

- Marxist transformative action: Marxist views hold that the totality of contemporary society needs to be fundamentally transformed (sublated) in class struggles in order to overcome social problems and establish a just, fair, co-operative, participatory society.

The characterization of positivism just given is based on the theoretical issues that were at hand in the German positivism debate (Adorno 1969a), the operationalization of postmodernism is based on the characterizations given by Alvesson/Deetz (2000), Harvey (1989), and Best/Kellner (1997, 2001), the taxonomy of Marxist thinking is derived from Marx (1844a), Horkheimer (1937/1970), Marcuse (1937), Demirovic (2003), Honneth (2007), Winter/Zima (2007).

For each of the 9 qualities in table 1, one variable was defined. This guarantees that positivistic, postmodern, and Marxist views can overlap. Furthermore, the examples mentioned in the texts both for societal problems in general and information-related societal problems were gathered. For both aspects it was assessed which types of problems were mentioned. For this assessment we used the differentiation between economic, political, and cultural aspects of society (cf. Bourdieu 1986, Giddens 1984, Habermas 1981), and further added the ecological dimension (that could eventually be subsumed under economic aspects, but was added as a separate category because ecological problems have become during the past two decades a separate domain of concern, Beck 1986). Another variable that we defined was one that identifies if repressive aspects are present in the text. This variable was assessed positively if in a text there were elements that mentioned topics that are typical for right-wing and conservative thinking as positive values of critique (e.g. racism, pro-corporate or anti-unionism arguments, religious thinking, favouring of free market liberalism, homophobia, anti-Semitism, etc.). Another variable was used for measuring the complexity of the arguments (complex, average, trivial). A text was considered as complex if it engaged with the philosophical arguments on the notion of critique made in the two stimulus texts and provided comments on them. A text was considered as trivial if there was no engagement with the philosophical notion of critique, and if critique was discussed based on common everyday life understandings and non-philosophical terms. If elements of both types (complex, trivial) were present, the text was assessed as "average".

Based on these methodological premises, we tested several hypotheses:

- H1: Positivistic arguments are most frequently employed by students in describing what they understand by the notion of critique.
- H2a: Students, who employ Marxist elements of critique, tend to provide complex arguments.
  H2b: Students who provide simple arguments, tend to have a positivistic understanding of critique.
- H3a: Students who have a positivistic understanding of critique, tend to mainly stress non-economic, cultural examples of societal problems.
  H3b: Students who have a Marxist understanding of critique, have a strong emphasis on socio-economic problems of society.
- H4: Students who mention repressive elements as moments of critique, have a positivistic understanding of critique.

In the next section, we will present the findings of our study.

4. Presentations of the Results

Three hardly positivistic students, four positivistic students, and four strongly positivistic students gave repressive arguments. This shows that the overall majority of students who employed repressive arguments (72,7%) were positivistic or strongly positivistic. All students who mentioned at least one Marxist element of critique did not employ any repressive argument. Likewise all students who did not mention any positivistic arguments also gave no repressive statements.

These results show that a positivistic notion of critiques does not necessarily lead to repressive arguments. But the employment of repressive arguments was in the overwhelming majority of cases based on a positivistic notion of critique. Therefore we can confirm hypothesis 4.

Analyzing the concrete examples of social problems that should be criticized, 15 repressive examples that are typical for conservative and right-wing thinking were given (by 11 students):
moral decline (5),
threat to national identity due to decline in the birth rate (3),
strikes (2),
dumbing down due to moral decline and technology (2),
lack of profitability (1),
threat of fundamental social change (1),
lack of censorship of information (1).

In the concluding section, we will interpret the results presented in chapter 4.

5. Interpretation of the Results and Conclusion

The conditions for studying at universities in 2008 are different than in the late 1960s and 1970s, where student radicalism was the norm: A survey among young people aged 14-25 in Austria showed that 75,2% believe that even young people with good education do not have a job guarantee (Institut für Jugendkulturforschung 2005: 127). 64,9% believed that in the future they would have to face unemployment (Ibid.). 36,2% of those Austrian students who have not passed exams within one academic year, say that the reason is employment-related (Unger and Wroblewski 2007: 94). Employment is the top obstacle mentioned. Students at Austrian universities on average spend 11,5 hours per week in paid employment (ranging between 5,9 hours in montanistic studies and 13,2 hours in the social sciences) (Ibid.: 129). 59,6% of Austrian students have paid employment during the semester (Ibid.: 135). In Austria, 85% of all students are permanently or occasionally gainfully employed (BMWF 2007: 61, 68f). In other European countries, the rate of students with paid employment is e.g. 63% in Germany, 54% in Finland, 46% in France, 67% in Ireland, 71% in the Netherlands, and 69% in the UK, which confirms the general trend of the emergence of a working class studentship (Eurostudent 2005, 92). The top reason for employment is that 72,9% of Austrian students who have paid employment say that this is necessary for gaining their living (Unger and Wroblewski: 147). 53,8% of Austrian students say that without paid employment they could not afford studying (Ibid.: 150). The high rate of employment of Austrian students reflects the introduction of tuition fees at Austrian universities in 2001 (2008: 726,72 € per academic year)2. This affordability problem concerns especially students from lower income families (67,8%, Ibid.: 153). 52,9% of students from low income families say that their financial situation is bad or very bad (Ibid.: 213).
In our case study of communication students in Salzburg, positivistic thinking was widely spread (75% of all students), anti-capitalist thinking is present, but to a much lesser degree

(17,3%). Our interpretation of the results is that the increasing penetration of the academic system with economic reason that is brought about by neoliberal policies and that could be strongly observed in Austria during the past decade, has contributed to the strong dominance of positivistic thought among students. Most students have to combine paid employment and studying and are facing insecure employment perspectives after finishing studying. The practical experiences of students as precarious labourers and the fear of not finding a good job can either advance proneness to positivistic or radical thinking. Given the fact that many courses at the University of Salzburg are organized in a positivistic way and are oriented on instrumental reason (teaching students what they have to know in order to become public relations experts, journalists, advertising specialists, etc.), it comes as no surprise that the majority of students in our case study has a positivistic understanding of critique and has hardly interest in socio-political issues.
Another result of our case study is that in order to arrive at an anti-capitalist understanding of critique, complex modes of arguing are needed, whereas positivistic thinking reflects everyday reason and is frequently based on rather simple arguments. Under the given societal conditions, what Herbert Marcuse termed one-dimensional thought seems to penetrate the academic system and students' consciousness. One-dimensional thought and behaviour is characterized by the tendency that "ideas, aspirations, and objectives that, by their content, transcend the established universe of discourse and action are either repelled or reduced to terms of this universe" (Marcuse 1991: 12). There is a "total empiricism", an orientation only on that which exits, not on that which could be or is desirable. Given the predominance of one-dimensional thought in our case study, the notion of critique was deprived of its negative features that question capitalism and critique by positivistic-oriented students. The concept of critique was predominantly interpreted as a purely positive immanent epistemological procedure, by which existing knowledge is improved. The notion of critique was not repelled, it was generally considered as a very important concept by all students. All of them considered themselves as critical students. However, positivistic students reduced the notion to a term of the existing capitalist universe. It is particularly alarming that 11 students, of which 8 argued positivistic, associated critique with conservative motives and topics like anti-unionism, moral degradation, lack of profitability, or threats to national identity. However, also a certain, although rather small share of students (17,3%), considered critique as radical critique of society, and hence as a procedure of negation.

The difference between the situation in the 1960s that Marcuse described and today is that Marcuse spoke about everyday life that was increasingly permeated by one-dimensional thought, whereas the academic system was considered as a space where critical thinking was still possible and present. Today, one-dimensional thought seems to colonize all realms of society, the last resorts of radical critique in the academic system also become increasingly penetrated by instrumental reason. The commodification of education not only takes on the form that students have to pay for university attendance in ever more countries and in many cases therefore have to take up paid employment, it also means that universities become more directly related to industry, are expected to gather third party funds by co-operating with corporations, capitalists or representatives of industrial federations are offered strategic positions in university administration, curricula and courses become oriented on the capitalist economy, disciplines that cannot be connected to economic interests and commodity production are cut down institutionally, students are forced to complete unpaid or low paid internships in corporation as part of degree programmes. The university is presented as ivory tower that is disconnected from practice in neoliberal discourse. The connection to practice takes on economic forms, i.e. education is commodified and corporations gain direct influence in universities. Practice is not understood as emancipatory political practice. David Harvey (2003, 2005) describes the logic of neoliberalism as accumulation by dispossession. In many contemporary universities,

education as public good that is part of the commons of society is dispossessed and transformed into an instrumental good or a commodity that comes under the control of capital. By dispossessing education, capital accumulation is advanced.

All students in one or another sense of the word claimed to be critical. This reflects a general tendency in science and society that all approaches and stakeholders want to be seen as critical. Critique is a term that is fashionable, and by being fashionable tends to loose its very essence as critique of domination. "These days absolutely everything is 'critical'. (…) 'Social criticism' is now as much a part of the business as 'cultural criticism' was at the time that Adorno was writing his essay 'Cultural Criticism and Society' (1949)" (Steinert 2003: 164). Heinz Steinert argues in this context in the tradition of Adorno and Horkheimer that one should hold on to a notion of criticism that does not in a trivial everyday manner consider it as not agreeing with something, but as radical reflexivity that questions domination: "Critical reflexivity involves analysing the domination that inheres in our concepts and ways of thinking, and examining the regime of domination that prevents societies and individuals from realizing their potential of freedom, equality and solidarity" (Steinert 2003: 168).

Students with a radical notion of critique in our study were especially interested in discussing socio-economic problems, whereas there is a tendency of positivistic students to neglect such problems. In discussing contemporary issues such as those related to information society, students showed particular interest in the problem of the digital divide.

The overall result of our case study was that positivistic thinking was the predominant way for interpreting the notion of critique. The danger that lies in this development is that students become rather uninterested in socio-political issues, consider political opposition as rather unimportant, that intellectual thought becomes one-dimensional, and that academics contribute to the emergence of a society without opposition. Such a society tends to be totalitarian and antidemocratic. In order to avoid such developments and to ensure that academia contributes to a dynamic democracy that is based on critical citizens who are able to formulate oppositional ideas, we arrive at a number of pedagogical conclusions:

- Social science courses should not be designed in ways that present Marxian thinking as outdated, but should present it as topical and connected to the everyday experiences of students as precarious workers and the emergence of an intellectual proletariat. Marxian ideas need to be connected to students' actual experiences.
- Particular emphasis should be given to social problems in social science courses, especially to contemporary socioeconomic problems. In our case study, 60 (37,2%) times socio-economic, 55 (34,2%) times cultural, 45 (28,0%) times political, and 1 (0,6%) time ecological problems were mentioned. The prevalence of socio-economic problems was also shown by the fact that poverty and unequal income distribution (20 times) was mentioned as the most frequent societal problem. The data show that 55,5% of the Marxist and strongly Marxist students, 30,8% of positivistic and strongly positivistic students, and 20,0% of postmodern and strongly postmodern students mentioned this problem.
  Topics that concern distributive justice and examples of unequal distribution seem to be particularly suited as a foundation for trying to advance critical thinking in social science course because they were considered as important by students in all three groups of thought.
- As radical thinking tends to be more complex than positivistic thinking, it should not range as one of many equally represented topics in social science courses, but should form the main element of academic curricula, syllabi, and reading lists. The main problem in realizing this suggestion is that Marxian and other heterodox scholars are marginalized and underrepresented in the academic system.

- Concerning certain contemporary problems such as the digital divide there seems to be a respectable student interest. The digital divide was mentioned 16 times as an important societal problem and hence was the problem mentioned second most frequently. The problem with the notion of the digital divide is that the concept frequently implies that the problem can be solved technologically. This might also be the reason why also students who base their thinking on technological rationality are interested in this problem. However, as this problem seems to be important for students, it could be used as an example that is discussed in relation with socio-economic problems such as unequal income distribution and class analysis (cf. Fuchs 2008a, 2008b).
- A necessary precondition for improving students' intellectual development is to decrease economic pressures so that they have more time and energy for engaging with and in critical thought. The resolution of this problem cannot be achieved by good pedagogy, but only by political change of the problems that the academic system is facing (coupling of employment and studying, lack of public funding for universities, introduction of tuition fees, lack of faculty members, abolishment of the academic career model, insufficient employment promotion for young scholars, orientation of curricula on internships, penetration of academia by economic reason).

In autumn 2008, a financial crisis hit global capitalism. This shows not only that neoliberalism has failed, but also that capitalism is an inherently crisis-ridden system. All forms of capitalism, no matter if more or less regulated, sooner or later enter crisis and therefore endanger the lives and living conditions of all people. The 2008 crisis of capitalism is the largest since the Great Depression that started in 1929. On the one hand this could open up potentials for a new rise of left-wing political critique of capitalism. In this case, also educational institutions could be transformed in such a way that Marxist critique becomes more important again and students are confronted with anti-capitalist criticism. On the other hand the crisis could also give rise to neo-fascism, as it did in the 1930s in Germany when Hitler and the NSDAP came to power. The rise of neo-fascism as a result of the current crisis would possibly bring a full end to critical thinking in universities and critical political practices, however marginal they might already be under the given conditions. We might enter a new time of struggle with both large risks and small opportunities for transforming not only education, but also society as a whole.

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[1] "Er muß, um sein Dasein als Völkerparasit führen zu können, zur Verleugnung seiner inneren Wesensart greifen".

[2] Prior to the early elections in September 2008, the Social Democratic Party (SPÖ) together with the Green Party and the right-wing Freedom Party (FPÖ) abolished the tuition fees that were introduced in 2001 by the right-wing coalition government formed by ÖVP (Austrian People's Party, conservative) and FPÖ. At the point of final correction of this paper, no new government has been formed. The most likely option is that SPÖ and ÖVP will form a coalition government. The ÖVP is a strong advocate of tuition fees. Therefore the conservatives might formulate the reintroduction of fees as necessary condition for a coalition and it could happen that the Social Democrats help reintroducing them because they want to be in government and hold the position of the Austrian chancellor, which is hardly possible without the support of the ÖVP. In the case that the tuition fees are not reintroduced, the rate of working students could decrease, but this would not necessarily improve the conditions for critical thinking in the universities because a major problem is the lack of state funds, which results in a very high number of students per academic faculty member. This condition is also reflected in the Times Higher Education World Ranking of Universities 2008, in which only one Austrian university is present in the top 200: University of Vienna dropped from rank #85 in 2007 to rank #115 in 2008. It has the worst staff per student-score of all top 200-listed institutions. The best score an institution can achieve is 100, University of Vienna's score dropped from 12 in 2007 to 10 in 2008. Vienna University of Technology, which was ranked at position 166 in 2007, dropped to number 244 in 2008. The University of Innsbruck dropped from position 225 to number 256. Given such bad working conditions for academics as in Austria, there is not enough time for supervising students intensely, which gives drawbacks for critical education. A further limit is that the number of left-wing professors and scholars in Austrian social science is just like in other countries decreasing. The reasons are that have adapted to the existing norms of society and that most of the professors, who were active in the 68 movement and have remained on the political left, are now retiring. Their positions are either cut down or refilled with uncritical, positivistic, postmodern, or conservative scholars.